What is claimed is:

1. An isolated protein comprising at least an 80% sequence identity of SEQ ID NO:2 and capable of degrading human complement protein C3.

2. The protein of claim 1 wherein the protein is isolated from *S. pneumoniae*.

3. The protein of claim 1 wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

4. The protein of claim 1, wherein the protein is a recombinant protein.

5. The protein of claim 1 wherein the protein is an isolated protein.

6. The protein of claim 1 having a molecular weight as determined on a 10% polyacrylamide gel of between about 24 kDa to about 34 kDa.

7. A peptide comprising at least 15 sequential amino acids from the protein of claim 1.

8. An isolated protein comprising SEQ ID NO:2.

9. A peptide comprising at least 15 sequential amino acids from SEQ ID NO:2.

10. A protein comprising SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the protein has a molecular weight as determined on a 10% polyacrylamide gel of between about 24 kDa to about 34 kDa.

11. The protein of claim 10 wherein the protein is isolatable from *S. pneumoniae*.

12. The protein of claim 10 wherein the protein is a recombinant protein.

13. The protein of claim 10 wherein the protein degrades human complement protein C3.

14. A protein comprising amino acids 1-50 of SEQ ID NO:2.

15. A nucleic acid fragment comprising nucleic acids 1246 to 1863 of Figure 1A.

16. A protein that degrades human complement protein C3 and wherein nucleic acid encoding the protein hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:1 under hybridization conditions of 6XSSC, 5X Denhardt, 0.5% SDS, and 100 µg/ml fragmented and denatured salmon sperm DNA hybridized overnight at 65°C and washed in 2X SSC, 0.1% SDS one time at room temperature for about 10 minutes followed by one time at, 65°C for about 15 minutes followed by at least one wash in 0.2XSSC, 0.1% SDS at room temperature for at least 3-5 minutes.

17. An immune-system stimulating composition comprising an effective amount of an immune system-stimulating peptide or polypeptide comprising at least 15 amino acids from a protein comprising at least an 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and capable of degrading human complement protein C3.

18. The composition of claim 17 wherein the protein is isolatable from *S. pneumoniae*.

19. The immune system stimulating composition of claim 15 further comprising at least one other immune stimulating peptide, polypeptide or protein from *S. pneumoniae*.

20. An antibody capable of specifically binding to a protein comprising at least a 90% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and capable of degrading human complement protein C3.

21. The antibody claim 20 wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

22. The antibody of claim 20 wherein the antibody is an antibody fragment.

23. The antibody of claim 20, wherein the antibody is a polyclonal antibody.

24. The antibody of claim 20, wherein the antibody is obtained from a mouse, a rat, human, or a rabbit.

25. A nucleic acid fragment capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 under hybridization conditions of 6XSSC, 5X Denhardt, 0.5% SDS, and 100 μg/ml fragmented and denatured salmon sperm DNA hybridized overnight at 65°C and washed in 2X SSC, 0.1% SDS one time at room temperature for about 10 minutes followed by one time at, 65°C for about 15 minutes followed by at least one wash in 0.2XSSC, 0.1% SDS at room temperature for at least 3-5 minutes.

26. The nucleic acid of claim 25 isolated from an *S. pneumoniae* genome.

27. The nucleic acid of claim 25 wherein the nucleic acid fragment encodes at least a portion of a protein.

28. The nucleic acid of claim 27 wherein the protein degrades human complement C3.

29. The nucleic acid fragment of claim 27 wherein the nucleic acid fragment encodes a protein that does not degrade human complement C3.

30. The nucleic acid of claim 25 in a nucleic acid vector.

31. The nucleic acid of claim 30 wherein the vector is an expression vector capable of producing at least a portion of a protein.

32. A cell comprising the nucleic acid of claim 25.

33. The cell of claim 32 wherein the cell is a bacterium or a eukaryotic cell.

34. An isolated nucleic acid fragment comprising the nucleic acid sequence gctcccagtatgcgtactcgtaaggtagagggaagaaaaaaactagctag.

35. A method for producing an immune response to *S. pneumoniae* in an animal comprising the steps of:

administering a composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of at least a portion of a protein to a mammal, wherein nucleic acid encoding the protein hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:1 under hybridization conditions of 6XSSC, 5X Denhardt, 0.5% SDS, and 100 µg/ml fragmented and denatured salmon sperm DNA, hybridized overnight at 65°C and washed in 2x SSC, 0.1% SDS one time at room temperature for about 10 minutes followed by one time at 65°C for about 15 minutes followed by at least one wash in 0.2xSSC, 0.1% SDS at room temperature for at least 3-5 minutes; and

obtaining an immune response to the protein.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the immune response is a B cell response.

37. The method of claim 35 wherein the immune response is a T cell response.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein the at least a portion of a protein is at least 15 amino acids in length.

39. The method of claim 35 wherein the composition further comprises at least one other protein from *S. pneumoniae*.

40. The method of claim 35 wherein the protein comprises at least 15 amino acids of SEQ ID NO:2.

41. A bacteria comprising an insertional mutation, wherein the insertion mutation is in a gene encoding a protein capable of degrading human complement C3.

42. The bacteria of claim 41 wherein the bacteria comprises an insertional duplication mutation.

43. An isolated protein of about 24 kDa to about 34 kDa from *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that is capable of binding to and degrading human complement C3.

44. A method for inhibiting *Streptococcus pneumoniae*-mediated C3 degradation comprising the step of :

contacting a *Streptococcus pneumonia* bacterium with antibody capable of binding to a protein with the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

45. An isolated nucleic acid fragment comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1

46. An RNA fragment transcribed by a double-stranded DNA sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:1.

47. The antibody of claim 20 wherein the antibody inhibits the binding of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterium to human complement C3 protein.

48. The antibody of claim 20 wherein the protein is isolated and purified from *S. pneumoniae*.

49. The antibody of claim 20, wherein the protein is a recombinant protein.

50. The antibody of claim 20, wherein the protein has a molecular weight as determined on a 10% polyacrylamide gel of between about 24 kDa to about 34 kDa.

51. An antibody that specifically binds to a peptide comprising at least 15 sequential amino acids from a protein, wherein the protein comprises at least an 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

52. An antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising SEQ ID NO:2.

53. An antibody that specifically binds to a peptide comprising at least 15 sequential amino acids from SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said peptide binds human complement C3.

54. The antibody of claim 20, wherein the protein degrades human complement protein C3.

55. An antibody that specifically binds to a peptide consisting of at least 15 sequential amino acids from SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the antibody inhibits the binding of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterium to human complement C3 protein.

56. An antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising amino acids 1-50 of SEQ ID NO:2.

57. An antibody that specifically binds to a protein, wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3 and wherein nucleic acid encoding the protein hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:1 under hybridization conditions of 6XSSC, 5X Denhardt, 0.5% SDS, and 100 µg/ml fragmented and denatured salmon sperm DNA hybridized overnight at 65°C and washed in 2X SSC, 0.1% SDS one time at room temperature for about 10 minutes followed by one time at, 65°C for about 15 minutes followed by at least one wash in 0.2XSSC, 0.1% SDS at room temperature for at least 3-5 minutes.

58. An antibody that specifically binds to a protein of about 34 kDa from *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, wherein the protein binds to human complement C3.

59. The antibody fragment of claim 22 wherein the antibody fragment comprises at least one variable domain.

60. The antibody of claim 59, wherein the variable domain is obtained from a mouse, a rat, a human, or a rabbit.

61. A chimeric protein comprising at least one antibody variable domain, wherein the antibody variable domain specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

62. The chimeric protein of claim 61, wherein the antibody variable domain is obtained from a mouse, a rat, a human, or a rabbit.

63. A composition comprising an antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

64. The composition of claim 63 further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

65. A composition comprising an antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3, wherein the antibody inhibits the binding of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterium to human complement C3 protein.

66. A composition comprising at least one antibody variable domain, wherein the antibody variable domain specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

67. The composition of claim 66, wherein the variable domain is obtained from a mouse, a rat, a human, or a rabbit.

68. A method for inhibiting *Streptococcus pneumoniae*-mediated C3 binding, the method comprising contacting *S. pneumoniae* bacteria with an antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3.

69. The method of claim 68, wherein the contacting *S. pneumoniae* bacteria with an antibody is by administering the antibody to an animal.

70. The method of claim 69 wherein the animal suffers from a *S. pneumonia* bacterial infection.

71. The method of claim 70 wherein the infection is a localized or systemic bacterial infection.

72. The method of claim 70 wherein the infection is selected from the group consisting of bacterial pneumonia, bacterial meningitis, and an ear infection.

73. The method of claim 69 wherein the administering of the antibody prevents *S. pneumonia* bacterial colonization.

74. A method of augmenting *S. pneumonia* opsonization, the method comprising administering to an animal an antibody that specifically binds to a protein comprising at least a 80% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the protein binds human complement protein C3, wherein the antibody inhibits the binding of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterium to human complement C3 protein.